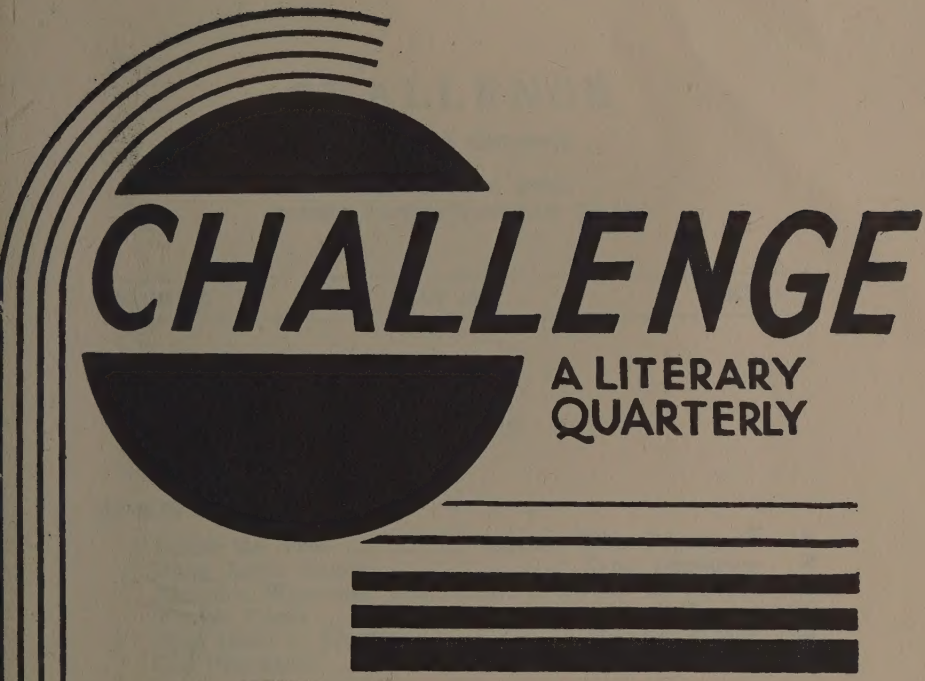

MORTON ELIOT FREEDGOOD
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JAMES O. WILSON
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Under The Tree

by

MORTON ELIOT FREEDGOOD

FLORENCE SAT down on the rock and opened her book. She leafed the pages. Lucille and Leonard standing made a shadow across the flapping pages. Finally, she shelved the book against her chest and looked at them.

"Allright," she said, "you can — " Lucille began to run, tugging at Leonard's hand. Leonard's toe slipped on a scab of mica: one of his knees scraped against the rock, his other foot kept running; then he managed to straighten up.

"Come back here!" Florence's voice was sharp. They came back. Leonard was rubbing his knee. They stood: Lucille was fingercombing her curls out of her eyes: her eyes were defiant.

"I have a good mind not to let you out of my sight for that. Let me look at your knee, Leonard." Leonard brought his knee over. Florence brushed some of the dirt off. There were no scratches. She turned to Lucille: "Go ahead, now, and don't go past the brook. And don't get wet. Take Leonard's hand."

They went down the opposite side of the rock. When they were out of sight of Florence's back, Lucille pinched her nails into Leonard's palm. Leonard said Ow! jerking his hand away. He began to cry.

She took his hand again. "Shut up, sissy. That'll teach you to get me in trouble. You're always getting me in trouble falling. I always get the blame."

He pulled his hand away and began to suck it. He stopped crying. She took his hand again and they went on down the slope towards the brook. Then they were off the slope, out of the trees and grass, and Lucille was helping Leonard slipping on the loose rocks that terraced the brook. They sat down on a white warm rock, and dangled the toes of their sandals in the water.

Later, Lucille was restless. She kept looking with fareyed intent at the soft water. Her bare legs were glistening with little drops of water, were glistening where the sun struck a few invisible blonde hairs into light. She said: "Let's go wading."

Leonard's tan sandals were brown with wetstain; his legs

were cool with splashed water. He pushed his toes together, cataracting the little current. "No, Florence would be mad."

"Florence!" Her lips exploded the end of the name into a hiss. "Who's Florence? Who's afraid of her, anyway? What can she do?"

"She slaps me."

"She better not try to slap me. I'll teach her a thing or two. I won't let her hit you, Leonard." She stood up.

"She'll tell mamma."

"No she won't. She won't tell her." Leonard was upward-looking. She looked down at him, convincing him with her face. "Don't worry," she said, saying it expressively with her face, "she won't tell mamma. Come." She reached down for his hand. He got to his knees and then onto his feet.

To reach the little square of sand that beached off into the brook, they had to regain the path, cutting halfway up the slope, skirting the spread of rocks. Lucille was eager: her drag on Leonard's hand made his feet go almost too fast.

They were off the rocks, onto the path, and edging downwards toward the sandpatch. Lucille's feet scraped making a sudden stop, and Leonard's nose stubbed into her shoulder. "Look, Lenny." She was excited, facing around away from the brook.

Leonard followed her gaze, rubbing his nose. He saw a man lying under a tree. The man was sleeping, and his lips were pushing out wetly into snores. His hat was lying crushed, half of it pillowing his head. It was a grey hat, greasestained, and his clothes were old and grease-stained. The sun came thru the trees, and spotlighted a large frayed hole in the knee of his pants. Leonard began to laugh when he saw the hole; then he caught himself, and stopped, looked up at Lucille.

She looked at him and tittered. Leonard began to laugh again. Lucille frowned and squeezed his hand. He pulled his hand away and dropped to the ground. He rolled on the path, doubled with breathless laughing. Hee-hee, his laughing was highpitched. It was crazy laughing, rolling him gasping for breath clutching at his strained belly.

"Shut up." Lucille bent over him fiercely. "You wanta wake him up?" Leonard kept on laughing. She took hold of his armpits and pulled him halfbent to his feet. She had to support him against her, trying to knee his sagging feet out straight. She pinched his arm and he winced. She pinched him again,

and his laughing gradually ran down.

They watched him for awhile, holding back their laughing. His face was heavy and lumpy, fuzzed with a dirty beard. His hair was oily, parted in the center, starting high on his forehead and running back long and thin. He snored windily thru his mouth and his nose. He had a black eye.

Lucille stepped nearer to him, off the path into under the tree. She motioned to Leonard. He shook his head. "Come on, sissy," she whispered to him. He shook his head. She came back to him.

"I don't want to," he said.

She tried to take his hand. He pulled it away and put it behind him.

"Sissy." She made her voice like whispering snakes. He shook his head and shrank away from her hand. "Little sissy," her lip curled away from her teeth. Then she turned and walked directly up to where the man lay. He smelled from liquor and vomit. There was something like white junket sticky around the corners of his mouth. His mouth and his nostrils were spread snoring. Lucille turned to Leonard and spread her palms out in front of her. There you are, they said. She walked back to him, slowly.

"Well," she said.

"I don't want to," he said.

She tried to grab his hand. He pulled it away and retreated a few feet up the path. She looked at him scornfully. Her lips said, sissy. She walked back under the tree and stood watching the man's face. She threw a quick glance at Leonard, and then she squatted beside the man. She drew a long blade of grass from the ground and stuck it in his open mouth. Then she ran back to the path.

The blade of grass blew out of his mouth when he outsnored. Lucille laughed. Leonard watched her, and he began to laugh. Lucille went off the path and under the tree. She searched around in the grass. and brought up in her hand a thin twig a few inches long. She held it up for Leonard to see. Then she broke it in half, and bending over the man's head she did something with the pieces. Then she ran back to join Leonard.

Leonard looked at the man. A piece of twig was sticking out of each nostril like a small brown tusk. Leonard began to laugh again, doubling over, saying oh oh, in falsetto between gasps. Oh, oh and he was down clutching his stomach, grinding his forehead into the soft earth with laughing pain. Lucille pulled him to his

feet, laughing, screaming, with tears coming from her eyes.

Lucille shook him, saying, "Stop, dopey." She kept shaking him, saying, "Will you stop?" until his laughing finally tapered down into giggles and hiccoughs.

"Now it's your turn," she said to him. She started to push him off the path. He braced his feet pushing backwards. She stopped pushing and stood looking at him with her hands on her hips with her lips curling.

"I'm afraid," he said.

"Afraid! What for? He won't do anything. He won't wake up. What are you afraid for?" Her voice became coaxing: "Go on, Lenny, do it."

Leonard looked at the man. The twigs fitted snugly into his nostrils, and he was breathing snoring heavily thru his gaping mouth. He looked at Lucille· her eyes were cozening: go ahead, they encouraged, smiling The man seemed to be sound asleep; there was no movement. Go ahead, Lucille's face was urging. Leonard bent down and scooped up a handful of soft loamy dirt off the path. He ran quickly off the path, holding the dirt between his palms. He stooped over the man's head, and dropped the dirt into the wide mouth. Then he turned, panicky, and ran back to the path. Lucille was clapping her hands; her eyes were bright, saying, good work.

They looked at the man, ready for flight. He began to gag, and his heavy belly heaved around his frayed belt. He retched, and a little spurt of bile showed green and slippery on his lips. Then he lay still, wheezing, with the dirt closing down into his throat. His eyes were closed, and his head moved slightly off his hat and on to the grass.

Leonard said, "Didn't I do it?"

"I dare you do some more," Lucille asked.

"Why should I?"

"You're afraid."

"Who is?" He bent down quickly and scooped up another handful of brown damp earth. He ran over and dropped it in the man's mouth. He turned to run, and Lucille was coming with two fistfuls of dirt. She dropped it in the man's mouth. They ran back to the path, giggling. Giggling and pushing each other they bent over and gathered some more dirt. They raced each other back to where the man lay, and first Lucille dropped hers into the man's mouth, and then Leonard. When Leonard dropped his in, the man's mouth was almost filled, and some of it spilled out onto his face. His face was getting

blue and his chest began to heave. He remained flat on his back. They watched from the path, breathless and giggling. His chest stopped heaving and his face was very blue. He looked funny, with the twigs sticking out his nose, with the dirt filling his open mouth, with his face very blue.

Lucille and Leonard were sweating. Leonard was elated and felt very bold. He wanted to do something more, but Lucille said, "I'm too hot. Let's go wading and cool off."

They went on down the path towards the beach, giggling and reminding themselves of what they had done. When they came to the sand, and they were taking off their sandals and socks, Lucille warned Leonard, "You better not tell Florence. She'll tell mamma."

Challenge

Love, I adore your timid tenderness . . . .
I love your soul-filled eyes, your naive way,
Your dark-hued head, your softly sweet caress,
The voiceless, lilting things you sometimes say.
But I am clay, my sweet, to earth hard bound —
I cry for passion's breath hot on my cheek.
Demands I make may frighten and confound
For these are what I need and what I seek:
A burning love that deepest depths can plumb —
A love that adds and heightens inborn fire;
That leaves the breathless body tired and numb
When it has catered warmly to desire.

You are so sweet — so sweet! I love you much . . . .
But I am raging flame. Dare you to touch . . . . !

(From "Urns of Fate," an unpublished Sonnet sequence)

LUCIA MAE PITTS

Dang Little Squirt

By ARNA BONTEMPS

NOTHING that Manuel remembered from his childhood was more indelible than the face of his Uncle Eligio. Most vividly he recalled the black mustache, long and villainous and curled at the ends. He saw no eyes. In the place where eyes should have been, the brim of the man's felt hat hid his brown face. The lips too, were obscure, but a crude hand-made cigaret indicated their position behind the mustache.

Now that he was fifteen and a man, it seemed very remote. Manuel was riding beside a swell looking gringo, a large man in an impressive blue suit. Not wishing to gawk, he kept stealing little quick glances at the handsome fellow. Manuel's chest was swollen with pride, though he had lost his hat and though his head was bowed. He suffered a few pains, too; his face smarted from bruises, and his shins were beginning to ache. Manuel felt a trickle of blood beneath his eye and daubed it with a large bandanna handkerchief. Yet he was proud, proud to be riding with such a swell gringo and proud to imagine that they were sharing the back seat of the large touring car on a basis of equality. For some reason it made him think of Uncle Eligio.

Probably it was because of something that happened the last time he saw his uncle. Yes, on second thought, Manuel knew that that was indeed the reason. And what a golden memory it was! Many a little Mexican boy in Los Angeles would have given his eyeteeth for that experience. And if the same youngsters could see him now, excusing his bruises, they would feel the same way. Manuel became very quiet with his thoughts. The car rolled steadily.

The boy's beautiful hair was in a childish tangle; his thin brown face and his downcast eyes were troubled and melancholy. Holy Mother, he thought, and crossed himself surreptitiously. What had become of Uncle Eligio since they parted? And why is it a fellow loses his best friend instead of one he cares less to keep? Why, for example, could it not have been his papa instead of the young uncle who went away? The father was always working and seldom home anyhow; his loss would have seemed much less to the boy. But Uncle Eligio had been a companion, had taken Manuel to town on the street car, had bought him candy and had allowed him to play in the plaza. The two had fed the white pigeons together.

At first there had been no Uncle Eligio. When the little family came to Verdugo Road, Manuel remembered, there had been just three of them—the sober man in overalls and sombrero, the short fat woman with a shawl over her head and the ragged barefoot child. They must have made an unforgettable picture. They followed a wagon path, the old unimproved road, through a eucalyptus grove in the afternoon; and when twilight fell, they came to a high place between two foothills and looked down on wide purple orchards and tiny blue houses with yellow lighted windows.

Manuel clung to his mother's hand and amused himself by turning the thick gold band on her finger. No one spoke much, but the father was particularly silent. He seemed uncertain and a trifle worried.

That night they failed to find the poor cluster of unpainted shacks they were seeking. Instead they rested under a tall black pine. Manuel and his father slept on the warm earth, but the mother did not lie down. She sat at the trunk of the tree with folded hands and bowed head. Now and again she dozed, but she was too concerned about the small bundle of valuables at her elbow to sleep soundly. The trifles were tied in a black cloth caught together at the ends, and they represented the entire baggage of this tiny migrating flock.

In the early morning they came to the grocery store of a man who spoke their language, a man of their own kind. He did not live like a Mexican, this storekeeper, and he did not dress like those that Manuel knew, yet there was that about him that made the small homeless family feel at ease. His name was Olivias, and when he had talked awhile with Manuel's father across the counter, he came to the door and pointed to a clump of high shrubs beyond a rail fence. The huts were there, he said, nestling in the thicket of lemon verbena and castor bean trees.

Manuel, leaning against a sack of potatoes, sifting the big red frijoles of another sack through his fingers, hated to leave the spicy little grocery. There were strings of chile pepper, garlic, sage and dried figs. Barrels, boxes, sacks and bins scattered about the room, gave the place an air of enticing disorder. Two or three fat green flies kept circling overhead, booming against the screen door. But, of course, Manuel could not hope to stay behind. His parents were anxious to get settled.

"Vinga." The mother, who had said nothing since reaching the store, turned and held out her hand for the youngster. "Come

along now. You won't have to walk much further."

II

Before Uncle Eligio came, the family slept on the floor. And since there was no stove and not even a chimney in the house, they cooked and ate at a mud fire place in the yard. Later they got a small table with a red and white cover, and still later a kerosene lamp. Then came a chair. Manuel's father found it in a rubbish pile. He strengthened the legs with wires and nailed a new bottom in it. With this the room was complete. But nobody ever sat in the chair till Uncle Eligio came. The door step was just high enough to make a good seat for the old folks, and Manuel was used to sitting on the ground.

All in all, the new home would have been delightful had Manuel been able to find playmates, other children of his age. Unfortunately there were none, and he had to entertain himself by climbing the castor bean trees, making bean blowers of their hollow stems, crawling under the house on his stomach, and occasionally wandering down to the store. Usually he did not remain away from the house long. Very soon he would hear his mother's voice calling across the still fields, "Man-oo-ayl;" and he would start home on a run.

When he had climbed the fence, he would see her in the doorway with hands on her hips.

"I was just playing horse," he would protest. "I ran down to Senor Olivias's store, but I was coming right back."

"I know you were coming back," she always told him, "but *when?* Besides, whoever saw a horse climb a fence? You just run your bronco around here where I can see you. Understand?"

"Yes, mama."

But the next day he would have his horse over the fence again, and mama would have to call and probably threaten to whip.

One day when the store was closed, some holiday that Manuel could not remember, the boy rode his stick horse down to the road and saw a strange man sitting alone on the tiny veranda. The man wore a purplish blue suit that seemed to Manuel very beautiful. A white felt hat and an orange necktie also caught the youngster's eye, but he did not venture near enough to speak.

A little later Manuel returned and saw the man leaning against a telephone pole. He was a thin man with darting eyes that could scarcely be seen under the brim of his hat. He kept his face tilted forward. One thumb was hooked in his vest, the other in his belt. Between two of his fingers there was a cigaret with a thread of

smoke curling upward. And Manuel was interested, curious in fact, but again he withdrew and hurried back to his own doorstep.

In the afternoon the stranger parted the immense red leaves of the castor bean thicket and stood looking at Manuel's house. For some reason this sudden appearance of the man frightened the child.

"Meda, meda," he whispered. "A strange man is coming through the thicket, mama. I think he's coming here."

The mother waddled to the door, but she did not answer. She did not speak for a long while. She stood looking at the man as if she thought she knew him but did not want to believe her eyes. The man came nearer, walking slowly, indolently.

"Hello, Hortensia," he said without excitement.

"Eligio! Mi hermano nino!"

She flung chubby arms around her brother and cried.

Eligio put his hand on Manuel's head. Then he went inside and slid into the chair beside the table. And when night fell and the boy's father returned, the uncle was still slouched in the same place. He hadn't even removed the white felt hat. The kerosene lamp hollowed out a small cavern in the darkness of the room. The little round flame sat on the table like a yellow flower in a vase. A large bottle of whiskey that Eligio had brought, that he kept tasting throughout the afternoon, stood beside the lamp. When he shook hands with his brother-in-law, Eligio did not rise.

"Hello, Pablo,' he said.

Manuel's father looked at the younger man without smiling.

"You're kind of low, brother. Spruce up," he said. "We're glad to see you."

Uncle Eligio did spruce-up—later. After a few days his spirit brightened, and he played a game of handball with Manuel against the side of Senor Olivias's store. Another day he took the youngster to town on the street car. They went directly to the plaza, and Manuel romped while the man sat on a bench. From that hour they were bosom friends.

III

Once when the two were leaning against the iron fence and feeding a flock of fantail pigeons, Uncle Eligio touched Manuel's arm and pointed to a window across from the plaza.

"Look," he said. "What a pretty senorita that is."

"Yes," Manuel said.

She was like a picture of an angel or like the mother of the baby Jesus—a gringo with yellow hair and white dress. Manuel didn't know that people called these senoritas pretty too, but he felt it was all right. This one sat beside a typewriter. Her fingers

were very busy. The sunshine in her hair made Manuel think again of the pictures he had seen of angels. He began to feel solemn, though it was plain Uncle Eligio did not feel the same.

They walked down Main street, looking in all the shop windows; when they reached the post office Uncle Eligio bought Manuel a bag of popcorn from a huckster, and they turned again toward the plaza.

"Let's go back and see if the senorita is still in the window," he said.

"All right."

Manuel was occupied with his popcorn now and had little time for anything else; but he saw that the streets were filling up with people, that the street cars were no longer half empty, that the sun was slipping behind the tall buildings.

The young woman had left her window across from the plaza. The shade was partly drawn, and the room was so dim Manuel could not see within.

"She's gone," Uncle Eligio said. He glanced at his watch. "I guess she quits work at five."

"H'm." Manuel tried to share his uncle's disappointment, but he had no words. "I guess so," he said.

"Well, we'd better go. It'll be dark when we get home now."

The next time they came to the plaza, Uncle Eligio took a seat where he could look at the window without turning his head. He sat there all morning, and his eyes were very intent. Manuel's interest ran to other things, but in the afternoon he saw Uncle Eligio beckon with his hand, and he returned promptly to the bench.

"Here," the man said. "I want you to do something for me. Take this note to the building across the street and hand it to the senorita at the window. She is alone now. You can open the door without knocking and walk in. The steps are around the corner."

Manuel was delighted but a little frightened. He took the little folded paper from his uncle's hands and started across the street. He went up the public stairs in the little old fashioned office building and walked to the door at the end of the hall. He hesitated a moment then entered.

The young woman with the pale yellow hair rose from her chair by the typewriter when she saw the youngster. She smiled and slipped her fingers through his tangled hair. Yet he liked the feel of this senorita's hands on his head. She said a few words in the odd speech that Manuel was accustomed to hearing but could not understand very well, and he shyly produced the soiled note and placed it in her hand.

Immediately her expression

changed. She flushed angrily and went to the window. Then she called Manuel and asked him a question. He did not understand, so he pointed to Uncle Eligio sitting rigidly on the bench across the street. From the second story window the man's mustache seemed uncommonly black, villainous. Manuel saw no eyes, only the brim of the white felt hat where eyes should have been. A thread of cigaret smoke curled above the Mexican's head. And the young woman getting the picture, drew the blind with a gesture of disgust. Then she pointed Manuel to the door, and the child went out fighting back tears.

"It is nothing," Uncle Eligio said. "Don't be a cry baby. She didn't mean it. All senoritas act like that sometimes. They don't mean it. It's a pretty way they have—playing angry when they're happy. She liked my note. I'm sure she did."

"Oh," Manuel said, his eyes very large. I didn't understand. I thought she was really angry."

It was a long time ago, but Manuel remembered that for several weeks nothing happened, though they came regularly to the plaza, though Uncle Eligio sat on the same bench with hat pulled over his eyes and gazed for hours at the window across the street. Whenever the stenographer saw him among the other Mexicans who gathered there, she would draw the blind impatiently. And each time Uncle Eligio would chuckle and say, "She likes me, Manuel. She likes me well, but she's bashful."

IV

Now that he was a man, fifteen years old and riding beside this handsome gringo in the swell blue suit with the gold buttons, Manuel understood things better. The bruises on his face still hurt, his shins still ached where they had been kicked, but these pains were nothing to a man of fifteen. Manuel raised his head, stretched out his legs. Uncle Eligio was a fellow after his own heart, a man who understood women and was not afraid of the very devil.

Finally the trips to the plaza ended. One morning when Manuel and his uncle were feeding the pigeons, the man suddenly took the boy's hand.

"Here, Manuel," he said. "She is going home early today. Come with me."

They were waiting on the sidewalk when she came down the stairs. She wore a hat with a broad, soft brim and a wide blue ribbon. She turned down Main street, and the man and the child followed her. Uncle Eligio's head was bowed, his hands thrust deep in his pockets. In the middle of the block the young woman entered a drug store and sat down at the soda fountain. When she

had been served, Uncle Eligio led Manuel to a seat beside her and asked for two dishes of ice cream. Seeing Eligio, she promptly gave him her back. She finished her soda and left the straws in the glass.

When Manuel and his uncle overtook her again, she was in the entrance of a book store, browsing over a stack of cheap novels. Eligio drew near. He selected a book with a gay jacket picturing a man and woman locked in embrace. He held it in front of the girl and touched her with his elbow.

She raised her eyes slowly, and he pointed to the picture, then to her and to himself. She stiffened, gave him a withering stare, and fled into the street. Eligio and the youngster continued to plunder the books aimlessly. In a few moments the girl returned with a uniformed policeman. She was breathless.

"There he is," she cried. "He sent me this note by that child several weeks ago. Ever since he's been watching me from the plaza. Today he followed me from work. He insulted me a moment ago."

Eligio did not raise his eyes, but when the officer came over twirling his baton and took him by the arm, the Mexican flew into his face like a game cockerel. The immense man pushed him away with his open hand.

"Bad, hunh? Well I've got the medicine for your kind—if you must have it.'

Eligio flew back at the policeman. He began laboring with the strange language that Manuel could not understand, babbling fruitlessly.

"Carramba! Why you wan' a-rrest me. I do nothing. Ga' damn, I do nothing."

He slipped his hand into his pocket, produced a knife. The girl bit her knuckles. Manuel began crying. When Eligio lunged again, the officer tapped him with the baton. Eligio lost his hat, dropped to one knee.

"Want some more?" the officer said. "Or are you gonna come along like a nice boy?"

There was a crowd gathering. The policeman took Eligio's knife, handcuffed the Mexican's right wrist to his own left. They walked slowly.

In the afternoon when they had left Uncle Eligio at the jail, the policeman took Manuel home on the street car. And what a triumph that ride was! Manuel could still feel the thrill of sitting beside the huge policeman while all the people in the car stared.

. . . . . .The auto halted, and Manuel stepped to the ground. His mind, however, was far away, still running back to the day Uncle Eligio went to jail. It was a long time ago, but he couldn't forget it.

Suddenly something blunt punched his ribs. Manuel swung around viciously and began throwing punches at the big fellow who rode beside him in the policeman's uniform. The man held him away easily with his left hand.

"Dang little squirt," the officer said. "Are you gonna start it again? Gonna make me beat you up again, are you?"

"I do nothing," Manuel heard himself saying, and it occurred to him as they came from his lips that they were the same words Uncle Eligio had used. Manuel felt big. "Why you wan' a-rrest me?"

"Get the hell in here. Little greaser still in diapers, around here trying to assault women. Damnedest thing I ever heard of."

Again he punched the boy's ribs with the baton. Manuel bowed his head, went up the steps to the jail.

———:o:———

To a Seagull

In vast white circles wheeling —
A feathered bolt of light,
Down through the sea-spray stealing —
Your white wings tipped with night . . .

Sea gypsy! King of those who roam,
Voice taunting cries — you're free!
Though once you were a fleck of foam
Loosed somehow from the sea . . . .

———:o:———

Drought

The once green land lies bleak and barren now,
The rich black loam that clung to last year's plough

Blows into clouds, a prey to every breath,
And even weeds have bowed to bitter death.

Can dry earth feed a single hungry mouth?
What then a heart? God save my soul from drought . . . .

FRANK G. YERBY

Alabama Welcomes You

MYRON A. MAHLER

Jonas Wilson walked under the big banner NIGGER DON'T LET THE SETTING SUN FIND YOU IN THIS TOWN hanging from the drug store across to the grocery on the other side of main street, the warm wind flaunting its red letters waving a warning to the Negroes hustling their last minute shopping as the sun began to dip behind the hills.

He walked slowly along the red clay road dragging his tired feet through the dry dust making little red clouded eddies around his feet. He dragged his body with five *try to get more, nigger* back breaking picking cotton sweating in the sun dollars in his pocket and his cramped and unable to straighten *pick faster, nigger* fingers clenched tightly around the dirty bills.

The hills blackened in front of the sun then the sky blackened and ran over the hills and over the road and only a glint of light from a kerosene lamp from a cabin in the trees and a soft cool breeze promising a cool tomorrow to rest and sit in the shade and listen to Evaline singing in an off key hum and the smell of why does ham taste better on Sunday.

The cabin loomed black in the blackness of the sky and behind the trees and black in the daytime from the wind and the rain and the sun on the paintless wood rotting in the earth. He opened the door.

Evaline, Evaline

He groped to the table hiding in the darkness and the kerosene lamp smelling from the smoke against the shade and the smoke spot on the leaking ceiling with pots and pails on the floor catching when it rained and plopping small drops of water in the wood fire charred pans and then the lamp flickering dull yellow and then bright yellow with his fingers away from his pocket and clenched around the wick adjuster and the old calenders and magazine covers flickering bright colors against the wall never painted and spotted with the wind and the rain and the sun.

Evaline, Evaline

The cool breezes blew against the door banging against the wall flickering in the yellow light throwing a yellow shadow outside against the trees murmuring in the cool breeze and then a low moan mixed with the trees and like the trees and

then a moan rising above the trees.

Evaline, Evaline

She was lying on her stomach against the cabin with her black hair red with dust and pine needles like falling hairpins and her face to the side and open at the mouth with an *O Lawd, O Lawd* moan in her throat. He bent down beside her unclenching his fingers and easing them under her limp moaning body and his body bent from the cotton fields and *Evaline, Evaline* in his throat and then her body against his and her breath hot and thick in his face.

He laid her down on the still unmade bed and the fire unlit and the woodbin empty with the ham waiting to be cooked on the table by the fireplace. He rubbed her wrists and then the wood still unchopped lying in the clay where she had falllen and the axe swinging bending his picking bent back.

The fire flickered the room and the walls and her now purple face and he sitting on the bed rubbing her wrists.

Evaline, what happened?

O Lawd, O Lawd

He ran through the door and on the red road with his fire and kerosene lamp fading through the trees and the blackness and then another lamp.

He knocked on the cabin.

Who dere?

Open quick. It's me, Jonas

The door opened and Thames standing by the door and Virginia and Charlotte and Corey and William and Henry sitting around the table stopping eating and wiping their ham greased fingers in their clothes and staring at him.

Wad's de madder?

He grabbed Virginia by the arm.

Come quick. Somethin's de madder wid Evaline

Evaline lay on the bed with her body twisted and her arms clenched around her stomach and Virginia shouting.

Git me some col' wader, quick

He gave her a sheet and that ripping sound like Evaline's moan and *She sho' gonna be high wid me fo' tearin' her sheet* water soaked cloths around her hot head and neck and Virginia rubbing her wrists and shouting.

Git de doctor, quick

The red clay road again and the trees hurrying past and the lights from the cabins like long streaks of light and then the bell sounding out through the closed door and the doctor's wife clean looking and neat.

Wad's de madder, Jonas?

Were de doctor tell him come quick Evaline tell him come quick

De doctor's not heah. He had a call while back. Mis Washing-

ton's gonna have her baby. Wad's de madder wid Evaline?

Ah'll get him

Yo' cain't do dat, Jonas. He cain't get away

Evaline's sick ah found her lyin' at de cabin all cramped up an' moanin'

Ah'll send him soon as he gets back

He made to move from off the door.

Wait a minute, Jonas

She turned and then came back with a box in her hand.

Give her some o' dese pills till de doctor gets round

Evaline still lay in bed with her body cramped and Virginia rubbing her wrists and changing the cloths and her body swaying with tears coming down her cheeks and then trying to force the pills in Evaline's mouth and Evaline jerking and twisting and her *O Lawd* moaning and he standing by the bed watching and waiting by the window staring into the blackness and the night and then Virginia getting up and whimpering.

Git de white doctor, quick

Main street cut a hole in the darkness with the stores sending white shafts into the yellow air and the men standing on the street corners draining bottles of corn and swamp licker and walking arm in arm with their wives holding brown paper bags and coming from the movie house dressed with a neon marquee and strolling passed the drug store and the grocery across the street and under the banner NIGGER DON'T LET THE SETTING SUN FIND YOU IN THIS TOWN.

He stood in the shadows down the road by the OPEDEIKA, ALABAMA WELCOMES YOU sign in the road and watched the banner and the men big and husky getting drunk and watching them watching him and then crouching back further in the darkness and remembering Harvey Cather when he was high and walked into town and the men were high and they formed a circle around him and beat him and then someone shouted for fair play and they stripped him and put big one eyed Connolly in the circle and a knife in his hand and the next day Harvey was found slashed and bled to death in the ditch by the side of the road.

He moved further into the shadows and the trees blotting out main street and then he heard the *O Lawd, O Lawd* moans and Virginia whimpering *Git de white doctor, quick* and out of the shadows then slowly and noiselessly toward the sound of the drunken laughter and the banner waving over main street.

He moved closer to town and

into the air getting yellow and the black sky falling behind with his clothes beginning to show in the light and his face remaining like silhouette in the face of the light then footsteps behind coming fast and in the trees again shutting out main street then a drunken voice.

Come out come out wherever you are

He stood still in the blackness and the footsteps getting closer and the drunken voice again.

What are you hiding for, Jonas?

Ah ain't hidin', Mr. Tanner

Then come out from behind that tree

Yas suh, Mr. Tanner

Don't you know you shouldn't be here

Yas suh, Mr. Tanner

Then get home before I call the boys

Yas suh, Mr. Tanner

Then get

Yas suh, but yo' see suh Evaline she's sick an'

That's too bad, now get

He began to walk back down the road and the footsteps began to fade and entered the laughter and then back again tree by tree into the yellow light and then a turn to the right and along the shadow of a house.

Footsteps again and lying flat on his stomach smelling the warm earth and the footsteps fading and moving again hiding from the street lights. He saw the DR. GERALD SCOTT, M. D. sign yellow in the black air and a noiseless walk up the steps then his hand shaking on the bell and a woman standing by the open door.

What is it?

Ah came fo' de doctor. Mah wife's sick an' our doc done gone way t' Mis Washington's

Just a moment

Then the doctor came short and stocky with a big nose.

Doctor, come quick. Mah wife she's sick

Nigger, what are you doing in town?

Then suddenly the doctor's face changed reddened and his eyes glassy and pushing Jonas aside and rushing into the street calling.

Look what I found

Doors opened and men running and his voice reaching main street.

Look what I found

More men running and gathering around the doctor and then.

Look a nigger

He saw them coming and

down the street on to main street and men running after him and throwing stones and then a hand on his collar and then his face warm with blood and then — — —.

———:o:———

I Sit and Wait for Beauty

To John Lovell

Long have I yearned and sought for beauty
And now it seems to be a futile race
To strive to look upon the marvel
Of so fair a face.

She is not here with the trees
That bend to wind in endless grace
Nor has she come from a blue sea
In the frothing lace
That breaks upon the shore in white ecstasy.

She did not come on the piercing call
Of wild birds in flight
Nor in young love did I find her
Nor in the wordless wonder of the night
Or with yon' star that holds my breath
Upon a silver spear. Thus I know her to be more than all
These things — than life or death —

And even though I become a God
With all magic secrets at my command
She will ever hide her face
And elude my grasping hand!

MAE COWDERY

Twelve Cents

ALFRED MENDES

Ships coming to Trinidad enter the Gulf of Paria through any one of the three Bocas, the first running between the mainland and the island of Monos, the second between Monos and Huevos, and the third and widest between Huevos and Chacachacare. These three islands. together with others inside the Gulf, are used as health resorts by the well-to-do Trinidadians. On the southern coast of Monos are three or four bays, each with a furnished house. The bay nearest the mainland at the south-eastern corner is called Grand Fond.

Arty was the new caretaker at Grand Fond. He had had no experience of "islands life" before, but because he had for months been out of a job in Port of Spain he had accepted this one. People in town had told him that he would be able to augment his earnings by fishing and tips from holiday-makers. Never in his life had Arty pulled a boat, but he was tall and strong, and he hoped to master the art of sculling in a short time. With this end in view, every morning since he had come down he had taken the boat and pulled about the calm waters of the bay. The ease with which he managed these short excursions surprised and filled him with confidence. The afternoon before he had accompanied Trubuse, the caretaker of the neighbouring bay, on a fishing expedition. He was not given an oar, but he sat in the stern of the boat watching Trubuse carefully as he pulled in fish. Soon, he said to himself, he would be able, like Trubuse, to scull out to the open sea alone and catch fish.

The only thing he didn't like about the life was its utter loneliness at nights. The first three nights he amused himself by plucking the strings of his quatro, and on the fourth night a new difficulty arose; he found himself with no food for the morrow and no money left of his first week's advance.

For a long time he sat thinking over his problem. The night was a clear one and the wind sailed up the hillside to him in a gentle even flow. He heard the soothing wash of the sea on the beach below. A night-bird twittered in the tree near-by. Starlight was on the waters. His quatro lay beside him on the grass. When at last he went to

his shanty to sleep he had found no solution to his problem. In town, he thought, it would have been different. There he had friends to whom he could have appealed, but who was there here?

Next morning Arty rose early and fixed away his little cot Then he went to his cupboard and remembered that he had no food. He sat on his doorstep and gazed across the Boca to Teteron Bay on the mainland. There there were shops, and he was sure he could manage the mile or so separating him from Teteron, but what was the use when he had no money?

At midday he was more hungry than ever. The sea air gave him an appetite. He walked about the hillside, beads of perspiration standing out on his black face. His kinky hair was a knot on his head. He saw a steamer sailing past Gasparee on its way, no doubt, to the second Boca. He thought of all the food on board that steamer; his stomach growled.

At three o'clock, when the sun was hanging like a burning cauldron over Chacachacare, he felt he was going to faint. He filled another glass with water, and just as he gulped down the last mouthful he heard footsteps approaching his shanty. He went out. Three young coloured men in holiday attire confronted him.

"You the caretaker?" one asked.

Arty nodded.

"Look here, we stranded on this island. The boatman on Balmoral gone out fishing. We come to ask you to take us over to Teteron, but between us we got only twelve cents. We will pull across; all you got to do is to pull back. You do it for twelve cents? Is all we got," the man added, noticing Arty's hesitation.

New strength surged up in Arty's broad chest. He looked across the Boca; the sea was calm. Some pelicans lazily circled overhead.

They launched the boat. Two took an oar each and pulled out with strong practised strokes. Arty sat in the bow, watching them. The man at the stern said:

"You got a dandy boat here. John."

"I name Arty, sir."

"And you got a more dandy name, Arty." The rowers laughed.

"We coming down on Sunday again. If you got nobody at Grand Fond you let us take a dip? We give you a tip you know, John."

"O. K., sir. I look out fo' you all. I name Arty, sir."

On the jetty at Teteron the three men paid Arty his fare and went off. Arty moored his

boat and hurried to the shop. There, standing at the counter, he devoured two loaves of buttered bread. With the balance of the money he bought a pound of rice and two pounds of flour; and, with these parcels strolled back to his boat.

The sun was already low down and a sharp breeze was springing up. He smothered his rising timidity with a laugh. He began to scull out. The boat shot forward gracefully, the water flapping against her sides, with pretty little noises. For ten minutes everything went so well that it seemed to Arty as if he had been handling boats since he was a child.

Resting on his oars, he looked ahead of him and noticed that the bow of the boat was point ing away from Grand Fond toward the open sea beyond the Boca. He tried to straighten her out but could not. He rested again when, to his surprise, he observed land moving slowly past him. He rubbed his eyes and then knew that it was his boat and not the land moving. He looked at the sea; the sea was like a river flowing through the narrow channel of the Boca.

Gripping his oars, Arty put all his strength into an attempt to turn the boat, but the more he tried the more exhausted he became.

The sea was now rough, and the sun sinking below the horizon. His boat rose and fell. Clouds, gathering in the east, menacingly advanced up to the zenith. A solitary pelican, crying, hovered over the boat for a while and then darted toward the land.

Arty pulled desperately at the oars. A wave splashing against the boat flung spray into his face. He turned to the shore, framed his hands to his mouth, and screamed for help. He did that three times. The wind snatched his screams away toward the open sea.

An hour later night was over all and the wind whinnied and the waves rose high up and fell low down, and the rain seemed to be washing the world from stem to stern.

Miss Hood is Shocked

HUGHES ALLISON

MISS HOOD was an extraordinary person. She possessed the best qualities (and none of the poor ones) found in a thousand other people. But Miss Hood had carried her distinctive perfection so long—not, however, without charm and grace and wit—that she wearied of it, despised it, and considered it detrimental to her happiness. All of this lassitude, nevertheless, was well concealed and deeply tucked away, even from her best friends.

She was now in her twenty-ninth year, had never been called upon to defend her honor either by word or look or gesture, had never lacked an escort or a position or the right thing to say at the right time. This—she found boring after her second year in high school and a complete aversion by the time she was twenty-six. And it had all been thrust upon her by something entirely beyond her control; at first by nature itself and then by people unconsciously determined that nature continue this abomination. To recount the chain of circumstance contributing to Miss Hood's present boredom from birth: she had been a "good" baby (she hadn't cried often, or been sick even in the least; she had eaten the correct thing just at the right time in the prescribed quantity). And her school career from kindergarten to Vassar had been one unyielding line of perfect marks, attendance, adoring t e a c h e r s (meaning they adored their pupil) and admiring classmates. Of course her family—the Hoods of New England—treated her with awe. The girls who were her friends did likewise. And the boys and the men and even the professional rakes every girl is bound to meet, all of them—dammit!—resurrected the ancient rites of chivalry and knighthood, treating Miss Hood with flawless respect.

Perhaps it was Miss Hood's physical beauty rather than her mental achievements — she *did* have more than her share of brains — which made men so utterly timid. She was of medium height with a complexion like fresh snow blushing from the full passion of a faultless sunrise. She had long chestnut hair which she combed over her ears and tied in a knot at the exact spot where her neck faded into the rear of her head. Her eyes were almond shaped and blue. Her lips were full and red. Her shape — the breasts, the waist, the hips, the legs — was aesthetically phenome-

nal. Miss Hood's taste in clothes merely accentuated her beauty.

Young men called to see her, take her to a party, a dance, to dinner; they smiled and laughed and danced with her—each saying to himself, "what a lucky fool am I!" Then they took their leave hat in hand, hand outstretched—respectively, respectfully. Each, within himself, thought: "She cannot be for me. I'm too earthy; not the man I know such a girl as she dreams of. She is too unlike other women for such a low, common mortal as me to make love to." Even the least of them, even the most arrogant of them felt and acted and disparaged this way.

Her first name was Mary. Of late she had come to regard even that treacherously cruel. Several times when preparing for bed while standing before her mirror, combing, as it were, her long hair she had criticized her Christian name and unsophisticated character. Speaking aloud to her reflection she said: "Really, I'm afraid to be so good. Some new religious sect, needful of a fetish, might find out about my holiness. They might even set me up as a modern Virgin! Wouldn't that be ducky! My lord!—it would be terrible, with a name like Mary to add to such a calamity!"

So Mary, set up by family, friend, casual acquaintance, and the general public seemingly as the ideal super-woman, allowed the matter to go on and on—really too steeped in New England tradition, too conscious of the devout trust she inspired to come down out of this cloudless sky to where human beings sin openly and like it. Her manner of escape was crude: she knew people—authors, actors, divorcees, professional rakes—who made it their business to be publicly naughty. She read books and saw plays warranting censorship. But while all of this, the antics of her friends, the stories in books and plays amused her, had she aped them she would have been disgusted rather than satisfied by fulfilling a desire to be human with a vengeance.

Yet, she was not without the rise and fall of life, she remained within the circle of human affairs; the law of averages touched her life on occasions with cheer, happiness and gaiety, and on other more solemn occasions with sadness, heartache and plain hard luck. Her family was a very old one in New England. But her branch of it, though held high by prestige and esteem, had steadily lost its wealth—each generation had less and less of it. And then her father had to give up the manufacturing of shoes entirely because of a stroke. There was some money left to live on, but not enough; sister Helen's education had to be finished. The family bid Mary Godspeed and common good luck, and she went to

their friend, the president of a New York department store, to become the perfect secretary (without personal favors to the boss, of course), which was in keeping with her character.

* * * *

And so one day, having reached the age of twenty-nine and having been in New York (except for an occasional visit to New England) the last eight of those years, Miss Hood sat within her office silently contemplating her past and future. The former had had most of its ruffles ironed out. Her sister had finished school and was married; her father's health was better and he was active in business once more; Mary, herself, had become indispensable to her firm which consequently brought her a tremendous salary and unlimited independence. But the latter was dark and gloomy or appeared to be, merely because Mary was so perfect.

The telephone connecting her office with the outer office jingled. Miss Hood picked up the receiver and pronounced the word "yes" with just the right amount of interrogation. She looked out of the window which was on the eighteenth floor, then at the hands of her wrist-watch vowing the time to be ten minutes to four. It was raining outside; Miss Hood went home at four. She frowned because of the weather.

The voice of the girl in the outer office said: "Miss Hood, there's a gentleman here who wishes to see Mr. Geraden. He doesn't wish to give his name. He's been here before; in fact he's been here every day this week."

"Have you told him Mr. Geraden is out?"

"Yes, I have, Miss Hood. .. But he won't go!' The voice was a little hysterical. It was Saturday afternoon. Office people's voices sometimes get that way on Saturday afternoons, especially in busy offices.

Miss Hood noticed the gathering hysteria. She said: "Ask the gentleman to come into my office."

She hung up the receiver and waited. She knew this person's type well. He wanted a job; he wouldn't go to the Employment office; he would see no one but the head of the firm. Miss Hood remembered that he was one of the reasons for secretaries, feeling a slight twinge of humor as the thought struck her. But she had seen this man on Monday morning; she had asked him the usual routine questions: Did he have an appointment with Mr. Geraden? He didn't. Then Mr. Geraden was out and was there anything she could do? He said there wasn't. A knock on the door stopped her mental review of recent events. She said: "come in,' and the man opened the door and walked over to her desk. It was a large, beautiful desk—walnut, covered with

plate glass. It was orderly, exactly like Miss Hood. Its size, its orderliness, its beauty often awed people.

(But it didn't awe this man. Yet, there was awe *about the man; and like the awesomeness in a spiral painted on a disk. . . . .revolving — first slowly, then rapidly. The disk might have been the flesh and blood of the man, him self; and the spiral might have been the light in his eyes blazing and dimming with suspicion.*)

Miss Hood smiled. She smiled professionallly. Her smile was meant to inspire confidence; it was meant to completely disarm Miss Hood's visitor. But the scintillation in the man's eyes grew more suspicious.

He held a battered, colorless hat in his hand. His hair needed cutting, was cold blond with a curl in the forelock. His face was ruddy and young, very young, and very tired. He was tall and strong; but his clothes fitted him badly. His clothes needed pressing and cleaning. He needed a new shirt, a new tie, a pair of new shoes. He was decidedly not the sort of person to come into the office of the president of any firm.

Miss Hood picked up a pencil, held it posed importantly in the air and declared: "You're the gentleman who's been asking for Mr. Geraden every day this week. I'm very sorry, Mr. Geraden isn't in." She said this with a soothing inflexion here and there in her voice.

The suspicion in the man's eyes increased. No one had ever been suspicious of Miss Hood. She said: "Mr. Geraden really isn't in."

The man turned and walked to the door from whence he had come.

Miss Hood had never been so annoyed before in her life. She raised her voice somewhat. "He *really isn't in.*"

The man looked back at her, disgust struggling for a place in his eyes—fighting hard with the suspicion. And then he went out.

Miss Hood sighed.

She went to a closet, took out a light coat, laid it on her desk, powdered her nose before a mirror hanging on the back of the closet door. When she was quite ready, and it was precisely four o'clock, she left her office, nodded good-week-end to the people in the outer office, went down in the elevator and out of the building. It was still raining—a bit harder now—and when she reached the curb her usual taxi was missing. Miss Hood stepped back until she stood within a dry spot beneath a canopy before the building. The dry spot was already partly occupied —partly by five or six hundred late shoppers and partly by the young man with the suspicious look in his eyes. Miss Hood smiled at him—the least bit friendly-like, the least bit profes-

sionally. But there was no point to her smile. The man nodded.

"You don't believe Mr. Geraden was out all week, do you?" Miss Hood said to him. There was no point to her saying it.

The man said, "No." He said it rudely.

Miss Hood's face turned scarlet; she felt angry—which was very new to her. She considered herself insulted. She knew immediately that there was more to be said to this man. A taxi crawled to the curb. Miss Hood held up her finger which is a New York woman's method of signaling a taxi-driver. While two hundred other New York women fought over the taxi, Miss Hood turned to the young man to be polite.

"I live just off the park," she told him, a little uncertain as to his interest in the matter and her real intentions in being so polite. "Could I give you a lift?"

He looked her up and down. He took all of her in. And then he laughed as if what he saw amused him tremendously.

Miss Hood's under jaw swung down at his reply. "I live *in* the park. Any entrance will do."

The other two hundred still at the curb, rather that portion of it just vacated by the last taxi—which happens to be the custom of New York shoppers following each other around like sheep. Miss Hood and the young man ran for a cab just stopping ten yards away. The other two hundred watched them capture and board it before they moved to the spot it left.

In the cab she asked: "Don't you have a home?"

"Nothing but the park."

She thought of the rain. "Isn't there a municipal lodging house?"

"There is. But the park is cleaner—no bugs, snores or overstrong disinfectant to burn out your nostrils in the park."

"What about rain?"

"As long as the weather's warm an old timer can find a dry spot."

"What do you do about food?"

He was silent.

Miss Hood's eyes opened wide and stared full blast at the man seated beside her. She regarded him with mixed emotions, some of which were feminine, others of which were sprung from the humane interest even the least have for the down and out. This latter group of emotions was severely intense within Miss Hood; this was her first *raw* contact with the depression. She might have given him money from her purse or she might have uttered some sympathetic remark or told a funny story or recommended religion. But nothing seemed appropriate except the sudden silence within the cab and the continual roar of traffic outside of it.

The taxi drew up and stopped before a towering apartment house with a marble front, glass

doors, a bright canopy and a footman in an admiral's uniform. Miss Hood poked a bill through the little window separating driver from passengers; the driver took it and turned to stare haughtily at the footman who helped Miss Hood to the sidewalk, who in turn motioned to the ill-dressed young man still within the cab to come out. She turned to him just as if he were the Prince of Wales seeing her home from a Diplomat's reception, and said: "Do come up for a while," —which shocked all three of the men. Miss Hood noticed their reaction and enjoyed it. She had never shocked anyone before in her life.

In the elevator the man mumbled: "I don't want you to—" and could go on no farther.

Miss Hood raised her eyes and wrinkled her forehead quizzically.

When she fitted her key in her door lock, he said: "You don't know me!"

She opened the door and stepped inside. He followed. While closing the door she asked: "What is your name?"

He twisted his battered hat in his hands uncomfortably and replied: "William Hatworth."

Miss Hood gestured toward the living room and a couch. He went in and sat down awkwardly; she walked toward the door of another room after she had said: "I'll change my clothes. And then if you don't mind helping me a bit in the kitchen, we'll scare up something to eat."

* * *

It was a Saturday afternoon. It was ten minutes to four. Miss Hood sat within her office contemplating her recent past and her immediate future. The former had been radically unconventional, gloriously romantic, charming with indecision. The latter seemed a mist filled with the same ingredients, lacking, however, tangible evidence of them—except that William Hatworth still lingered at Miss Hood's apartment. His being there appeared to be tangible evidence enough for romance, the unconventional and indecision. But there was an empiric element fused in the compound which made the man, himself, so perplexing and mysterious that Miss Hood couldn't name it or touch it or cast enough illumination upon it to see it; and she had had two months to study William Hatworth.

(*About him there hung a cloud, within him there lived an occult image — the two pushed back into semi-obscurity by a* ***ghost*** *screaming silently. The impossible! . . .Suspicion still in his eyes. . . .The amusement he tried to conceal when the impossible played upon his chord of humor. . . ..The whole of him was a cryptograph with the key flung away.*)

Of course, Miss Hood realized

that she had stepped out of character. She was like an actress long applauded in the role of the chaste and ideal, suddenly cast to play the scarlet woman of too easy virtue—for whom there is no applause. That which concerned her most was not the disapproval of those of her friends who knew about her affair with Hatworth nor the disapproval of the elevator operator and the footman and the rest who had made of her a model, but the lack of originality about the situation. Other women had picked men up, encouraged them to be affectionate, and some—just as Miss Hood had done—had won their affection. But William Hatworth's love seemed inadequate compensation for Miss Hood's anaemic reactions. Not that she wasn't thrilled at being kissed and petted; not that living with a man wasn't a stimulating experience. Miss Hood was thrilled; she had passed through a stimulating experience, was still passing through one.

But it had not and did not shock her. And she had expected to be shocked. Everybody else who knew about it was shocked.

Four o'clock! Miss Hood threw herself into a wild scramble to reach home as soon as possible. Her brain was a firebrand of doubt and faith. It told her at first: "He'll be gone when I arrive! And he won't come back. I'll never see him again!" And then: "He'll be waiting for me. He'll always be waiting for me. He'll never leave me." While now and then between the two: "And what if he does go away! What if he never comes back. I won't miss him or care!"

It was like that until she had put her key in the lock with trembling fingers and pounding heart. It even continued until she had walked into the living room to stand still, staring wildly about. And then she saw him. She was in his arms, quieting her ruffled emotions. Still she was saying to herself: "This shouldn't be all there is to so radical an emotional change in life! I've been such a goody-goody—and now when I should be shocked, I'm not! Why can't I be? Why can't something happen to me, something so novel and different that not one woman in ten million has ever heard of it!"

* * *

Naturally Mary Hood and William Hatworth made a conventional game out of their unconventional lives. They told themselves and each other that the shelter she provided was temporary, fostered by the instability of the times, that the money she furnished was merely a loan, and that it was all due to her good fellowship and a mutual attachment. Naturally he was to pay it all back when he got a job. And he really went looking for a job. He didn't find

work; and she told him there wasn't a thing he could get at her firm. She lied though, for she was in position to "make" a job for any of her friends in her firm.

She lied—because she had always told the truth and she wanted to reverse the usual. Her reaction was that of pleasure, for her lie bound him closer to her and made him dependent on her. And *still* her reaction to a rank lie was limited. She hadn't been shocked—she hadn't felt her blood chill, her heart miss its beat; she hadn't been witness to a situation so rare in the experience of other women that it was hysterically phenomenal.

And then one night when they had finished their dinner, when she sat comfortably within the circle of his arm, it happened. *(The obscurity of his veiled amusement and occult suspicion burst into unforgettable prominence—like a spotlight suddenly pouring its intense glare upon a single portrait hung on the white wall of an otherwise bare room.)* And it was the man, himself, who made it happen, who made clear a vague point which should never have been vague—to him!

The pride of Miss Hood's life was the history of her family She liked to tell it again and again. She told it to William Hatworth while he held her in his arm, while they sat before an imitation log fire in a living room high up in a fashionable apartment house just off Central Park. She told him about her great grandfather, how he had fought Indians and founded a mighty business and had been honored by the King's messenger before the whole of New England. She told him how he had fought that same king later on. She told him how her grandfather had furthered that business and how her father who had given it up once had returned to it. She recounted the tales of the women who had married these men. She, herself, was proudly a Daughter of the American Revolution!

And when she had finished, there was a hush in the room, with nothing falling upon their ears but the purr of their own breathing.

Until he said—and his voice was low and casual—"I was born down in Georgia in a place not bigger than two city blocks with no more people in it than you'll find in this very building. My father was an old white man who had a big plantation. But he didn't live on it. He stayed in town and kept a general store, a livery stable and four colored women. My mother was one of them.

"She was fat and black; she washed and ironed clothes from morning 'til night. That's how she sent me to school—washing clothes. She even sent me thru

college, washing clothes. It wasn't much of a college, though. . . .. She's dead now. If she had lived, maybe I could have gone through medical school. But then I wouldn't have tried to be my father's son. And then I wouldn't have met you!"

He stopped talking. There was a hush, with nothing falling upon their ears but *his* breathing. It was warm in the room; but Miss Hood was chilled to the bone. At last, air gushed through her lips; she snatched it back through her teeth. There was much she might have said, but her words were few.

"Could you get your things together in three minutes? Could you be out of here in five?"

He said: "Sure!" There was no suspicion in his eyes. He was sure.

Miss Hood was shocked; but she couldn't tell a soul how or why or when—or by whom.

———:o:———

A Longing

As I walked alone beside the shore today,
I watched a sea-gull wend its weary way
Seaward, on and on, until I saw it lie
Against the ocean's bosom where it meets the sky.
And it lay there so long, so long,
Singing its love song.

Ah, love! That I might be the boundless sea,
And you a lone gull coming home to me.
Then I would ask of life no richer fare
If in my deepest hours of despair
You'd lie against my bosom — long, so long,
Singing a love song.

GRACE WALKER

Cell Phantasm

RUSSELL GARNER

A THIN yellow light filtered through the steel-barred door throwing oblique shadows upon the cell door. It hung from the end of an extension which stuck out from the wall at an angle from the cell. The fixing was loose and a slight breeze coming in through the barred window caused the oblique shadows to dance crazily.

Lying on the bunk inside the cell and watching the shadows was a man. An open book lay face downward beside his head. He had read until tiring eyes and aching head made reading difficult. For awhile the dancing shadows amused him, but even they grew tiresome. He rolled over and lay on his back staring wide-eyed at the dim ceiling.

He became conscious of night noises, those little meaningless sounds that drift from ceiling to floor, from corner to corner. At times they seemed to hang suspended in mid-air for a magic moment, then suddenly disappear. He tried to distinguish between them merely because it was something to do. At night, time hung fog-like over him, appearing to grow heavy and giving him the sensation of feeling it. A soft chuckle came from his lips. That was a good one—feeling time.

The bunk squealed in ghostly protest as he turned and faced the wall. His fingers crept along its cool dampness in an empty gesture. It was cooler than the air in the cell. An idea came to him. Pulling off his shirt he placed his bare back against it. The sudden cold sent a sharp chill through him, he jerked away from it. Damn, it was colder than he expected. He tried again gingerly. The coldness disappeared leaving in its place a flat damp hardness.

Without shifting his position he reached out a long arm for a cigaret and match-box. His fumbling fingers found a match; he struck it several times before getting any response. Then the sudden glare lit up the four corners of the cell bringing out in coruscating sharpness the canary yellow wall. Its light reached out and licked feebly at the Keeper's locker opposite his cell. Lighting the cigaret he held the burning match in his fingers as though reluctant to blow it out.

A picture hanging on the wall caught his eye. It had been cut out of a magazine during a moment when its suggestiveness had appealed strongly to his loneliness. The voluptuous pose of the girl brought back pleasant memories. But now it seemed to intensify

his loneliness instead of relieving it. The match died in a last feeble flicker. The cell appeared blacker than before, but the darkness failed to blot the picture from his mind. In the darkness it grew into a compelling lascivious thing. The thoughts it awakened brought back to him his need of companionship with other than men.

A burning desire swept through him, enveloping and powerful, sinking him deeper into the mire of despond. He fought like a man gone suddenly mad. A growing pain could have been no worse. What made him keep the damn thing anyway? He rose to his feet and tore it from the wall. Cursing horribly he threw it upon the floor and jumped upon it. Again and again he jumped until sheer exhaustion forced him back into the bunk. He lay with his eyes closed trying to escape from the hegemony of his desire.

The battle began again fiercer than before, but this time he refused to lie still. He rose again to his feet and began to pace up and down. Perhaps he could tire himself into a semblance of sleep. Four steps up and four steps back, his shoulders rubbing the wall when he turned. He counted his steps, one—two—three — four—turn—one—two — three — four. Time slipped by and still he paced until lassitude made itself felt in his legs. It stole slowly upward, reached his knees, his thighs, but he kept doggedly on.

Weariness finally overcame him and he fell log-like upon the bunk. A sort of stupor pervaded him but leaving in his mind a vague picture trying to push itself forward. He shook his head trying to clear his mind, but the picture persisted. A feeling of lightness, of floating in a cosmogenous mist as though he rested upon a cloud, lifted him. There was something unreal and yet familiar in the scene that drifted beneath his eyes.

A land of verdant beauty upon which walked a man and woman, met his gaze. A sensation of familiarity about them almost made him cry out. The cloud drifted him closer enabling him to peer into their faces. He recoiled in consternation. The man was himself; the woman was Nona.

There was a tiny dimple in Nona's chin. Her hair fell from her shoulders in a glorious auburn shower. Her eyes, dark with emotion, lighted up as though tiny fires burned behind them. He could see the rise and fall of her full breast. The voluptuous figure made the blood pound in his temples.

He tried to touch her, but some vagary of the cloud prevented him from doing so. He tried to call her name, she didn't hear him. His other self occupied her attention. The man opened his mouth

to shout but only a faint mumble issued from his lips. If he could reach Nona, to tell her how much he desired her. She would understand and would be sympathetic. She would release him from the bondage of futility that held him tightly clutched in despair.

Something was happening, something that sent a faint feeling of dread through him. The cloud shifted and for a hysterical moment he caught a faraway glimpse of oblique shadows moving crazily about him. A yellow eye glared mockingly at him and somewhere out of the night came a heavy tramping that seemed to come from over his head and receded in the distance. A weird squeak, then silence — silence heavy and thick.

The man felt as though he had fallen into some black bottomless pit and was battling to climb out of it. He was about to give up when the sensation of lightness came upon him again. A mist surrounded him as he floated upward. Peering through the mist he could see a low fruitful plain. He drifted like a lazy bird, cities passed beneath him, sending their dirty smoke upward.

He was conscious of no perceptible movement, yet there was a constant shifting of scenes. Finding it hard to concentrate, he no longer attempted to think. Thru it all ran a thread of impending doom that made him writhe and twist. The scene shifted again due to the vagaries of the cloud.

A forest burst upon his gaze, a forest full of brilliant colors and singing birds; lush undergrowth hid the ground. Lassitude stole deliciously over him. He would have liked to stretch himself out upon that soft green rug beneath him. A movement caught his eyes, coming toward him walking hand in hand, came a man and woman. He gave a cry of delight; it was Nona and himself. They sat down beneath a gigantic tree. He watched Nona unloosen her hair, it fell from her shoulders in a cascade of beauty.

A sound, deep-toned and bell-like reached him, he imagined Nona was laughing. She leaned back against the tree, her eyes closed. It wasn't clear to him how he happened to reach Nona's side. At first he was dimly aware of faint perfume, like that of springtime, filling his nostrils. Then warm flesh sent its burning thrill through him. Nona lay in his arms, queerly acquiescent.

Red lips invited him to a feast. His arms crept about her drawing her closer. He let one hand fall and it played a symphony in slow tempo as it crept about her body. A surging crescendo that rose to fever pitch as the warmth and softness of flesh foretold a conquest.

A jarring note obtruded, breaking off the symphony but leaving

it still vibrating his body. Towering over him was a vague form, man-like in contour, but beastly in its features. Upon its lips twisted a lecherous cynical smile. Eyes gleamed down upon the man and he drew back against the tree. The vague form was reminiscent of himself. He reached out to brush it aside; the movement aroused Nona.

The man was startled to find, instead of eyes dark with emotion, eyes filled with fear and loathing. He felt suddenly immersed in icy water. A maddening sense of frustration left him gasping for breath, disappointing him and ending the symphony. He pleaded, scolded, and threatened, but still fear and loathing shone thru her eyes. Then anger played its tune upon his nerves. He shook himself in an effort to get rid of this evil tune. A red mist surrounded him. He no longer rested beneath the tree.

The man had metamorphosed from player to spectator. He gazed through the red mist at a scene peopled with phantasmagorical figures. Unreal and yet familiar they impinged upon his brain until he was in a state of hypnosis—he could only watch, listlessly.

Out of the mist advanced another figure, a figure of a man. Utter insanity was stamped upon his face. The scene reached in and touched a responsive chord in the spectator's memory. He knew who the advancing menacing figure was, and the purpose. Perhaps it wasn't too late, he might yet save Nona and also himself. He twisted in his efforts to warn her of the approaching danger. He tried to yell, it was useless. Something held him tightly clutched. He wondered why he was so impotent. A squeaking protest came from somewhere under him.

The figure of the man was close upon the woman; long arms went out and fingers entwined themselves tightly about the beautiful throat. He could see the light dying out of those dark eyes. The woman's body stiffened, then went suddenly, strangely limp. But the figure continued to squeeze until its strength was exhausted. In a supreme effort the spectator burst the bonds that held him, he yelled and yelled. His yells seemed to split the cloud and he began to sink.

Downward he plunged into abysmal blackness in an apparently never ending journey. He imagined himself fighting with some unknown enemy whose strength was greater than his. A strange voice smote his ears, a voice he did not recognize. The downward plunge ended in a flat hardness, things began to take shape about him. A yellow light caught his eyes, he stared at it dully. He closed his eyes and quickly opened them again. They

wandered downward where oblique shadows danced erratically.

A low moan came from his lips as the scenes he had witnessed surged through his mind. The steel-barred door and window, the tiny cell and hard bunk, was the aftermath of what he had witnessed. He looked out of the window and was surprised to see the first grey streaks of dawn creeping through the window. The night was over.

———:o:———

What Bronze

What bronze fails to glitter in the sun?
What bronze is not silent with the moon?
What cherished web will not fall upon
The troubled sea with interwoven tune?

And towers of time carved in blue air
May interwind all the eyes have seen
Amid the soft winds; and the moon's stare
Turn the weary heart from brown to green.

JAMES O. WILSON

Beauty, Beer and Beechwoods

ROY DeCOVERLY

Believe it or not, there is a country in Europe that is entirely undisturbed by the menacing cross-currents of unrest that sweep over the continent; that has achieved a culture and civilization that even those great strongholds of Western progress, England and America, could do well to copy; that is world-famous for its charming hospitality; that is steeped in the glamour of a glorious and picturesque past, and possesses a lyric beauty of countryside that must be seen to be appreciated. In this nearest approach to a modern Utopia you will notice no evidences of poverty; you, as a stranger, will be welcomed with an uplifting smile; you will be overwhelmed with courtesies; you will be directed to a smart and modern hotel where the lowness of the tariff will surprise you, and you will be fed more food in a single twenty-four hours than you thought it possible for any one person to assimilate.

If you speak English you will be astonished to find that practically everyone with whom you come in contact will speak to you fluently in your mother tongue; you will be charmed to find that total strangers will go out of their way to do favours for you. You will find that all the plans you made before entering this Arcadia will have to be ruthlessly discarded, because the inhabitants will summarily take charge of you and put you through a programme of entertainment that will leave you gasping for breath. And when the time comes for you to leave, you will suddenly realize that you have become hopelessly attached to this smiling land with its green-spired, ancient-modern metropolis, and you will feel a genuine pang of regret when your boat or train or plane leaves it below the horizon.

I simply cannot understand why Denmark is so little known in this part of the world. To the average American, Denmark is a vague and ice-bound territory somewhere within the Arctic Circle, populated chiefly by polar bears. I have heard it characterized, by someone who at least knew that it was a habitable spot, as the capital of Sweden, and I honestly heard a lady in a tourist bureau ask if Scandinavia wasn't in Denmark, somewhere. So that when I return from a two years' sojourn in

Denmark, and tell glowing tales of the marvelous country in which I have been living, I notice in the eyebrows of my listeners a tendency to move upwards. But it is not necessary to exaggerate in speaking of Denmark. The little country, with its three million good-natured inhabitants, is full of surprises, and she leads the world in many more ways than you would imagine.

As a purely holiday country, Denmark offers boating, bathing and yachting that are unsurpassed anywhere else in Europe. For your walking tour she will provide sweeps of pastel-coloured, gently rolling country, veined with silver-blue fjords; peaceful, picturesque old-world villages; poetic, columned beech-woods; lordly armadas of glistening cloud; fantastic, flaming sunsets and softly melancholy, incredibly beautiful, glowing light nights. For the archaeologically minded there are important Stone Age remains, the famous Kitchen Middens from which much has been learned of the daily life of the Stone Age man, and the Kaempehje, the burial places of prehistoric rulers, not to mention the dolmens and other remains of early religions. If your interests lie in more modern things she will offer for your study the most successful government in Europe today, a government based on Socialism; she will call your attention to her educational system which has earned her the lowest percentage of illiteracy in the world, and which is eagerly studied and copied by other nations. She will proudly point to her achievements in scientific agriculture, which make of a not particularly fertile country the source of almost all of England's dairy supplies. To her system of co-operative farming she will point modestly, informing you that every civilized country on the globe has acknowledged her to be the pioneer and leader in this most necessary and beneficial movement.

But though you will be impressed by all these things and feel a little silly at not knowing more about a country that is so obviously a leader in civilization, it is the Dane himself who will impress you most of all and make you decide to return to his country as often as you possibly can.

Because there is no one just like him in Europe. His cousin the Swede is not such an extrovert. The Swede will not, while he is courteous and polished, take to you so rapidly. The Norwegian does not work so hard to establish pleasant relationships, either, and while un-

doubtedly kind, is not so hospitable as his Danish neighbour. The Dane has a lively curiosity about all things outside of Denmark; a love for all mankind; a peculiar sense of humour that is most ingratiating when you understand it; an appetite terrifying to behold; an uninspiring facade because of his ghastly tailors; an excellent education; the truest democratic feeling in the world; an insatiable love of entertainment and going places, and the most hospitable heart in existence. He has a deep-rooted love for his country, although he reserves the right to complain about it; an unerring eye and healthy disdain for cant and humbug; an absorbing interest in the English-speaking world; an aptitude for organization, engineering and beer-drinking, and a firm belief that all good Danes, when they die, go to Copenhagen.

The female side of his family have enjoyed equal rights longer than any other women in Europe or America, and accept it calmly without making a fuss about it; display a remarkable aptitude for doing things because they have been doing things for so long, and can wear sport clothes better than any other women in the world. They have no inhibitions about anything, but at the same time are modest and refined; will discuss things like sex simply and frankly and beautifully, are excellent mothers who bring up their children like human beings and not like half-wits. They are more devoid of sentiment than anyone else I have seen; don't make a fuss over love and things like that, and are superb at simply, cleverly and neatly annexing the men of their choice before the men realize they are being annexed. Each of them eats more confectionery and pastry and whipped cream than any three American or English girls, and yet they remain beautifully slim up to the age of about thirty, when they begin to fill out. Miss Denmark also feels this unreasoning love for Copenhagen, and though she sometimes expresses a desire to go to Paris for her honeymoon, she merely submits to fashion's dictates in so doing, and leaves her heart in her beloved metropolis.

I should never have used the phrase "unreasoning love" in writing about Copenhagen, for never was city loved with more reason. I have seen Paris—and was disappointed—I have thrilled at the magic of Florence, dutifully visited Rome, wined and dined and beered in Hamburg, danced in Stockholm, breakfasted, as I was told to do, at Grand Hotel in Oslo, strolled

on Picadilly, but always I found that my heart was far away in Copenhagen.

Copenhagen has been called "The Paris of the North". I should rather dub it "The Paradise on the Sound." To begin with, its situation, towered and twinkling, on this matchless sheet of crinkly, blue-gray, silver-flecked water catches your imagination right at the outset. Always there are a few birdlike white private yachts at anchor. The *Langelinie Promenade,* beloved among globe-trotters, winds along the water's edge, fringed with rose and rhododendron, shadowed by birch and pine and beech. At one end is the Pavillion, flecked with sunglints from the water, bowered in bird-enchanted trees. Here you have afternoon coffee—a sacred rite among the Danes—and if you are in the know, you order with it a *Linsekage,* a beguiling bit of pastry for which the pavillion is famous. If you are very fortunate and know some proper person, you may be invited to a whisky and soda in the building next door, the Royal Danish Yacht Club. Here you will find a coterie of tanned, glamorous and most hospitable yachtsmen; perhaps among them will be one of the princes of the Royal House—for the men of the Royal Family are all seamen—human and entertaining, speaking much better English than most Englishmen.

Copenhagen is preeminently a city of towers, such towers as you never saw before, representing wild flights of architectural fancy, but the general effect is lovely. The towers are all copper-sheathed, and the copper, of course, oxidizes with time—twenty years, the Danes say—and takes on a most heavenly blue-green colour. To see these Copenhagen towers on a moonlight night is something you will never forget. The architecture of the city tends toward the Dutch or North European Renaissance, but it is handled in a way that is entirely Danish. You will not forget the Stock Exchange, a fabled, gabled structure in the Flemish manner, with a spire formed of the intertwining tails of four dragons. Everywhere are delightful old gardens, and the Danes love fountains and put into their design the fantasy that they strive to conceal as a general rule.

In my favourite part of the city, *Christianshavn,* old-world canals, filled with fishing boats with coloured sails, wind through the streets. It is an old part of town and you will find streets that remind you of Montmarte—I remember one called Cul de Sac—streets that remind you of

Holland, streets that remind you of Limehouse and streets that can remind you of nothing but Copenhagen, because they are so intrinsically Copenhagen.

For the sophisticate there is the Hotel D'Angleterre on *Kongens Nytorv*—The King's New Square—upon the terrace of which you must have your tea or cocktails. It is a duty. While you drink your Oolong or Martini you listen to the birds in the trees in the middle of the square, watch the crowds of pleasure-loving Danes crowding into the Royal Theatre, and from time to time cast your eyes longingly down to *Nyhavn*, a lovely street, threaded with a canal down its middle, lined with naughty cafes and peopled with sailors from every port in the world.

I might write on like this for hours and never give you an adequate idea of the utterly disarming atmosphere of Copenhagen. You must go there and you must stay as long as possible, for it is a city that unfolds its charm slowly. You can, of course, enjoy three days there, but you will be amazed to find how rejuvenated you become if you stay three months. And go in June, for then the sun sets at 10:30 P. M. and rises at 3:30 A. M., the sidewalk cafes blossom out with geraniums and the best beer in Europe, and Tivoli, that queen of amusement centres, is at her height.

And what more of Denmark? Enough, at least, to fill three books. The Socialistic Government with its well-thought-out Unemployment Insurance, which has accomplished the miracle of creating a perfect democracy out of a monarchy. And yet the King decidedly has his place and is dearly beloved by every Dane. *Funen*, with its fat countryside, intelligent farmers and splendid game shooting. The enormous ferries, taking whole trains in their capacious maws, upon which one crosses the Great Belt to *Funen*. The Lake District, near *Silkeborg*, where you chug slowly down the chain of lakes in a buxom, contented launch, through indescribably beautiful scenery. Purple heather sweeps down to the water's edge, the trees meet overhead, in the marshes herons flash white wings among the reeds, and water-lilies in thousands star the surface of the mere. Jutland, billowing and blue-hazed; harsh, sand-duned and wave-lashed; glorious with pine and heather; rocky and rugged, hurling itself tumultuously into the thundering waves of the North Sea. And to be more homely, *Smorrebrod*, an adventure in gastronomics, a national institution that makes you —after you have incessantly

met its variegated array of fish, meat, eggs, vegetables, salads, cheeses, laid on slices of dark bread—almost regard it as a national infliction.

But I must end somewhere. Go to Denmark for yourself and see if I have not erred on the side of understatement. It is a wonderful country and a heart-warming one. There you may relax and drink in the joy of human companionship, nourish yourself with the milk of human kindness, refresh your soul with soft, lyric beauty.

And you need not do as the Danes, do, when you are in Denmark. The Danes will like you to do just as you want to do. You may even, as I did, wear a black Russian blouse and dress trousers in the box of an ambassador at the opening of the Royal Opera. But that I would not advise you to do unless you are, as I am, brown of skin and crinkly of hair, something that stirs the romantic nature, deeply concealed, that is so intrinsically part of the Dane.

———:o:———

Inquietude

Blue is this night of stars
But over the distant hill
I see lightning dart
  from a dusky cloud.
Discontent tears through me
  like the jagged flame
Which splits the air,
And like the answering thunder
I too would go
Crashing the mountainside
Til, all fury spent,
I sink and let the silver tide
Engulf me.

PAULI MURRAY

Song of a Song

Your song
Will be a rhapsody
For desperate folk.

A symphony
For the working class—

A voice,
For the silence of men
Who inch their way to bread
Night after night.

Your song
Will be the ugliness
Of starvation,
Dedicated to a deserted farm.

WARING CUNEY

Let Me Sing My Song

Let me sing my song,
Let me speak my piece.
Let the little soul of me find release
In the pounding rain
And the sucking mud;
The prehensible earth,
The salt of blood;
In the hungry moon,
The bleating night;
The moulded hill—
Dawn's acolyte;
In the level eyes
And the clasp of friends;
The plump little pool
Where the thin stream ends;
The germinal gleam
Groping, untaught,
Flexing the cramped mind
In thought;
Love flowing east,
Love flowing west—
The level land;
The mountain's breasts;
Let me sing my song,
Let me speak my piece.
Let the little soul of me find release
In the tree's roots,
The flower's breath.—
I fear the barren drought of death.

HELENE JOHNSON

Dear Reader

We are rather pleased with this issue, for most of the names are new to us, and we are glad to note that not all of the voices are Negro.

Most of them are young too, really young, which means that as good as they are now, think how much better they will be one fine day. So that for all we know we may be raising a crop of young geniuses. And we are glad they are cutting their talent on our papers.

Certainly we intend to go on printing the seventeen-year-old Frank Yerby as long as he sends us his poems. And Myron Mahler is twenty-one, and Morton Eliot Freedgood is twenty-two. Which makes us, in addition to feeling old, feel justly proud.

Even when we were turning ten, we had an old head on our shoulders, and went about patting the cheeks of shorter children. And now that our age enables us to be looked up to, we are more than ever willing to be a matriachal bosom. So **Challenge** continues to hold to its premise, and on the new voices depends its use and growth.

We hope there is space to quote from a letter Paul Smith, the editor of Provincetown sent us. He writes, "In your September issue I liked the Sutherland article particularly, and particularly disliked the Hawkins thing on Spirituals. It seemed to me that the latter was typical of the stupidity and waste that come from too blind adherence to Marxian criticism. Who the sam hill does he think did compose them if not the Negroes? Does he really believe that it is better to shout denials of one's heritage than to attempt to understand it and to go on from there without need for falsehood? Does he believe that the 1812 Overture is a reflection on Russians? I'd have published his piece myself, but I think he was wrong just the same."

We appreciate opinions, and would like to make this our liveliest page. D. W.

Voices

MORTON ELIOT FREEDGOOD, in Under The Tree has written his fourth accepted story. He is a young New Yorker who went for a while to C. C. N. Y., and since then has been an ice-cream vendor and an amateur actor, and is now reviewing books for the Brooklyn Citizen.

ARNA BONTEMPS, who continues to appear in our pages, is now at work on a novel.

MYRON A. MAHLER, another product of C. C. N. Y., writes of himself that he has been "a tramp, hobo, vagabond, salesman, demonstrator, reporter, candy maker, stock boy, counterman, and above all writer."

ALFRED MENDES, who has a novel out in England, is the man with the beard, and is a most engaging conversationalist.

HUGHES ALLISON is a New Yorker, but we have no biographical note about him. We really liked his story.

RUSSELL GARNER sent us his story from Leesburg Farms, New Jersey. He is convict 13386.

ROY de COVERLY returns from Denmark, but he is going back in April. We don't know what he was doing there, but we dare say it was nice.

HELENE JOHNSON is so retiring that some people believe her name to be a pseudonym. But she is married and unmatronly, and still has a fine talent that should be burning more brightly.

FRANK G. YERBY is so very young that he is still unaware of his youth, and his encouraging letters to us are almost grandfatherly.

WARING CUNEY sent us his poem from Rome. But we hear he is back in America now. Poetry making is his second love. Singing is his first. And Rome is his heaven on earth.

PAULI MURRAY contributed to our first issue.

LUCIA MAE PITTS is an old friend. Her poem appeared in March 1934.

GRACE WALKER has again added her voice.

JAMES O. WILSON is a newcomer to *CHALLENGE*. We hope we will see more of his work.

MAE COWDERY, who has contributed a poem in this issue, is another welcome addition to our circle of young friends.